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CIA deputy director offers insight on U.S. prestige

Frank Carlucci, a Scranton native named deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1978, is interviewed by staff writer Don Sarvey.

Q: When you work for an organization such as the CIA it must make your outlook on the world a little different than the ordinary citizen. How does it differ?

A: Well, it's an enormous education. You get a perspective of the world that you can't get anywhere else in government. I've been a for-

oreign service officer for some 22 years, serving in different parts of the world, but never have I gotten quite the overview that I have now. Not only do you see what the policies are, but you get an insight into all the inside information. From that aspect, it's a fascinating experience.

Q: It sometimes seems through American eyes that the world is an ever more hostile place. Is that really true? Do we have genuine friends?

A: Let's put it this way, I think the world's a more complicated place. Twenty years ago when I came into the foreign service, things were fairly straightforward. I can recall at that time we were worried about Korea. Korea was allied with China. China was allied with the Soviet Union. We've now seen a proxy struggle between the Soviet Union and China, and who knows where Korea stands? We've seen the Third World emerge as ... an ideological

battleground. We've seen the non-aligned movement. We've seen the growth of strategic weapons and an effort to reach a SALT agreement. We've seen national revolutions ... most recently in Iran. It's become a lot more complicated. I don't think this ... means that we don't have friends, that people don't listen to us and respect us. The fact that our president is in Israel trying to bring the two sides of that dispute together is evidence of the continuing prestige of the United States.

Q: With detente seemingly losing ground, is there any chance there's a new Cold War era ahead of us?

A: I don't know that I'd accept your characterization that we're losing ground. If you put yourself in the shoes of the Soviets, if you are Ivan Ivanovich looking at your government, we find that that government has problems. It's got a succession problem, it's got a leadership problem — aging leadership. It's got an oil problem. Their oil is topping out, rising demand. It's got an agricultural problem. It's got a problem of rising consumer expectations and declining growth rates. And they haven't done all that well. Obviously, they've got problems with China. And their relations with Japan are not all that good. They don't have much to show after massive support for Castro all these years in Latin America. In Africa they've got some targets of opportunity, but they were kicked out of Ghana and Guinea, Zaire, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia.

They've made some progress, obviously, in places like Afghanistan and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, (but) it's by no means certain that they've done all that well in the Middle East — not even in Iran, because the foreign policy orientation of Iran has yet to be decided.

So, I don't accept the characterization that we are losing. I would accept the characterization that the Soviet Union has become much more adventuristic in its foreign policy. It has shown a greater propensity or greater willingness to use its own military personnel overseas and to exercise its influence through Cuban and other proxies. And that is a significant new development that we have to take into account.

Q: Did China give any advance warning to the U.S. of its intent to invade Vietnam?

A: Well, the vice prime minister of China really didn't hide his intentions from anybody at any time, whether he was in the United States or in China. He made it clear that the People's Republic of China took a hostile view toward the Vietnam invasion of Cambodia and indicated China would be obliged to take action. It came as no great surprise to me.

Q: There has been some criticism that the U.S. government didn't have adequate intelligence, or perhaps adequate analysis of the information we did have, to anticipate events in Iran. Is that true?

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